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The National Security Working Group (NSWG) provides wide-spectrum coverage of issues like the Iranian threat, missile defense, sequestration, New START, events in Syria and more. We look forward to providing this newsletter to RSC members and welcome your input throughout the 113th Congress.

North Korea steps up dangerous rhetoric (Rep. Franks)

Last week the North and South Korean governments escalated their hostile banter to the highest level seen in years, with each threatening to annihilate the other just one day after the UN Security Council unanimously imposed tightened sanctions on the North for its nuclear test last month. Pyongyang also officially annulled the 1953 armistice agreement last week that halted the Korean War because of "the South's joint military exercises."

One top North Korean General claimed his country had nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles ready to blast off. South Korea said that if the North attacked them with a nuclear weapon, Kim Jong-un would be "erased from the earth." And now, almost 70% of South Koreans believe that their country should have nuclear capabilities of their own.



The administration has called this round of chatter from Pyongyang "bellicose rhetoric." But North Korea isn't focusing all of its negative attention on the South; Pyongyang's "scientific-cooperation pact" with Iran has managed to raise concerns within the Obama administration. The two military allies will seek to use the agreement to advance their nuclear capabilities, just as they have jointly developed missile systems, according to U.S. and U.N. officials. As well, all credible information shows that Iranian scientists were in North Korea for their most recent nuclear test.

And, despite joining the U.S. to push for tougher UN sanctions against North Korea, China has stated it will not "abandon" North Korea and will continue to sell oil to the regime.

At what point will our strategy with North Korea get ahead of their manipulative positioning? Sanctions are one step, but that is clearly not enough to counter the dangerous aims of this regime. Pyongyang has no desire to slow its nuclear programs, as it continues to make serious threats of nuclear proportions against the United States. Whether their current capabilities match the rhetoric or not, we cannot wait until it is merely their choice of whether to launch a nuclear weapon toward our shores or not.

We are banking on North Korea's incompetence and instability - is that really the best strategy for protecting ourselves against a regime bent on destruction?

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Israel Tests Arrow 3 Missile Defense Interceptor (Rep. Fleming)

President Obama's visit this month to Israel comes on the heels of the Israeli Defense Ministry's announcement of the successful testing of its Arrow 3 missile interceptor. The test successfully demonstrated a number of new technologies, including: a two stage rocket engine, a kill vehicle that allows for 90 to 180 degrees tracking of an incoming ballistic missile, and a flexible skirt for stability and increased speed in the second stage. With the ability to intercept medium and intermediate-range missiles just outside the earth's atmosphere, the Arrow 3 will form the outermost layer of the Israel's

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missile defense shield. Being able to shoot down missiles in space, the system could cause nuclear and chemical warheads to fragment securely. Providing more flexibility in the preemption of provocative acts by Iran, the Arrow 3 will add to Israel's deterrence in defeating Iranian missiles.

The U.S. should not be quick to forget Israel's use of its Iron Dome short-range air defense system last year against an estimated 420 Hamas rockets fired from Gaza. That Israel must resort to employing such defensive systems is a reflection of the failure of Obama Administration policies and diplomatic efforts. Either failing to foresee the rise of militant Islamism or simply choosing to ignore the warning signs that came in the wake of the "Arab Spring", the Administration has lost credibility in shaping events in the Middle East. Instead, President Obama has been reduced to merely reacting to aggressive and calculated anti-US and Israel moves, including the terrorist attack conducted by Ansar al Shariah, an al-Qaeda affiliated group, on the U.S. Embassy in Libya. Because of this, Israel must continue to develop and bolster its missile defense shield to resist Islamist threats to its existence.

This mission is just too important and too big for anyone nation. It is better to provide Israel with United States military missile defense capability and cooperative United States-Israel development so to assure the confidence of defense and flexibility rather than be forced to have no flexibility and rely on preemptive offensive capabilities that would increase instability in the region and cause catastrophic reactions.

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The Increasing Danger of Iran (Rep. Tom Cotton)

Iran has posed a grave threat to the U.S. and Israel, our strongest ally in the Middle East, for 34 years. The threat is growing, though, because Iran has ramped up its nuclear program—installing advanced centrifuges at its main uranium enrichment plant, according to the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency. If launched successfully, these machines could enable Iran to accelerate significantly its stockpile of fissile material that could be used to develop a nuclear weapon. Before the Senate Armed Services Committee last month, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta accused Iran of an intensified campaign to destabilize the Middle East by smuggling anti-aircraft weapons to its militant allies. Iran's export of so-called MANPADS—anti-aircraft missiles that can be carried by a single person—represent what Secretary Panetta rightly called a dangerous escalation.

Last month, House Foreign Affairs Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) and Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY) introduced the Nuclear Iran Prevention Act of 2013 (H.R. 850). This bill imposes additional human-rights, economic, and financial sanctions to slow the Iranian regime's pursuit of nuclear-weapons capability. This bipartisan legislation increases the pressure on the mullahs, especially by targeting those officials who brutalize their own people. I encourage RSC members to join us as co-sponsors of this important legislation.

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Each NSWG Item reflects the position and view of the authoring office. Questions or comments regarding the NSWG can be directed to:

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